

WASHINGTON STAR

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*A 3***Another Bizarre Turn****Chilean Slaying Suspect
American, Marine Says****By Jeremiah O'Leary**
Washington Star Staff Writer

A former Marine guard at the U.S. Embassy in Santiago has identified a photograph of a Chilean government official called "Juan Williams Rose" as an American resident of Chile named Michael Vernon Townley.

Sgt. Edward W. Cannell III, 27, of Beltsville, who served at the embassy in Chile between 1970 and 1972, told State Department officials earlier this week that the picture of Williams in Friday's Washington Star unquestionably was the young American he knew as Mike Townley. A State Department official last night confirmed that Washington now believes Williams and Townley are the same person.

This development further complicates the intensifying investigation by U.S. officials into the bomb-murders here of former Chilean Ambassador Orlando Letelier and his colleague, Ronni Moffitt.

The probe took this bizarre turn after The Star printed photos of Williams/Townley and "Alejandro Romeral Jara" and described them as being Chilean secret policemen who are believed to have had a role in arranging the fatal bombing at Sheridan Circle in September 1976.

COPIES OF THE passport-style photographs were obtained after U.S. District Court here sent formal letters to the Chilean Supreme Court asking that Williams/Townley and Romeral be interrogated about the Letelier murder with Assistant U.S. Attorney Eugene Propper and FBI agents taking part in the questioning.

Three days later, the Chilean newspaper El Mercurio printed the passport picture of Williams/Townley along with another somewhat similar photo and contended that Williams was actually an American, named Michael Townley.

The newspaper suggested that Townley was a CIA agent and had been active in the Fatherland and Freedom rightist group which fought against Marxist President Salvador Allende before he was overthrown in the military uprising of 1973.

If Cannell's identification of Williams as Townley is accurate, the implication is that Townley may have been recruited by the Chilean secret police organization known as DINA. Officials say there is no question that the two subjects of the photos were representatives of the Chilean government since they had

the American consulate to obtain the kind of visas used by diplomats.

THERE REPORTEDLY is no record in FBI or CIA files of Townley, officials said, but news reports from Miami quoted J. Vernon Townley as saying his son, Michael, was living in Chile when the parents last saw him three years ago. Townley is a U.S. citizen but had lived in Chile for several years while his father worked for the Ford Motor Co. there.

Cannell said Townley spoke fluent Spanish and was known to the small Marine guard detachment, to other young Americans living in Chile in the early 1970s and also was a casual acquaintance of Kelly Korry, daughter of then-Ambassador Edwin B. Korry.

"He was a transmission mechanic," said Cannell. "He used to hang around at Marine House. He had this goatee, and he could pass for a Latin; you could tell by his fingernails that he was a mechanic."

"I never thought of him as being a political type. To me he looked like a hippie or a Peace Corps type. He liked to go to a place called the Red Lion where there was sort of a poets' club. That kind of turned us off on him. Besides, we knew the Miristas (a leftist activist group) hung around there so we never were that close."

ASKED IF HE HAD any reason to believe Townley had any CIA connections, the former Marine laughed and said, "No way. If the CIA was hiring that kind of guy, this country is in real trouble."

Cannell said he would be interviewed tomorrow by federal investigators in charge of the Letelier case about his identification of Williams as Townley.

The photos of Williams/Townley and Romeral were included in the package of legal materials sent to the Chilean Supreme Court by District Court here.

Investigators believe the two DINA agents used false names to obtain official U.S. visas in 1976 and then made three trips to the United States, including stops in Miami, Washington and New York. Investigators believe they contacted anti-Castro Cuban exiles and arranged for them to plant the bomb that destroyed Letelier's car on Sept. 21, 1976.

Meanwhile, the Chilean government yesterday issued an official statement through the embassy here indicating it intends to cooperate